

REMARKS

Claims 1-43 were pending in this Application. Applicants have cancelled Claims 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 27, 29, 31, 33 and 39, and, hence, Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42 and 43 are now pending in this Application.

Pursuant to a phone conversation between Applicants and the Examiner on March 20, 2003, Applicants confirm their election requirement, without traverse and without prejudice and disclaimer, and select the following groups from the three sets outlined in the Office Action:

- Set I: material for the inner absorbent - Group a: the material being sponge;
- Set II: shape for the inner absorbent - Group A: the absorbent material having a rectangular shape; and
- Set III: material for the outer cover - Group 1: the outer cover as shown in Fig. 1.

Applicants submit that at least the following claims appear to read on the species just described and are not specifically excluded based on non-elected groups as outlined in the Office Action: 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20,

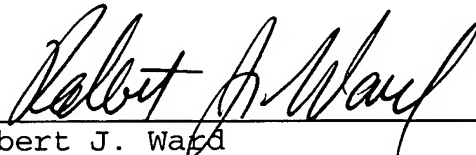
21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42 and 43.

Applicants respectfully request that the just listed claims be examined, and request that the following claims be cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer: 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 27, 29, 31, 33 and 39.

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that the Application and all of the currently pending claims are in condition for allowance , and Applicants earnestly seek such full allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions, comments, or suggestions in furtherance of the prosecution of this Application, please contact the undersigned by telephone at 214.979.3027. Applicants stand ready to conduct a telephone interview with the Examiner to review this Application if the Examiner believes that such an interview would assist in the advancement of this Application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert J. Ward", is written over a horizontal line.

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